

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

## (PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference TS 1409 PCT	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b>		See Form PCT/IPEA/416
International application No. PCT/EP2005/051002	International filing date (day/month/year) 07.03.2005	Priority date (day/month/year) 08.03.2004	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC INV. B01J8/22 C10G2/00 B01D29/00 B01D35/12			
Applicant SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ B.V.			
<p>1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p>3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau)</i> a total of sheets, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis of this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box.</li> </ul> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(sent to the International Bureau only)</i> a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s)) , containing a sequence listing and/or tables related thereto, in electronic form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).</p>			
<p>4. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I Basis of the report</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II Priority</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI Certain documents cited</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application</li> </ul>			
Date of submission of the demand  29.12.2005	Date of completion of this report  12.04.2006		
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:   European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer  Harf, J Telephone No. +49 89 2399-7845		



# INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.  
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## Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **language**, this report is based on
  - the international application in the language in which it was filed
  - a translation of the international application into , which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:
    - international search (under Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1(b))
    - publication of the international application (under Rule 12.4(a))
    - international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2(a) and/or 55.3(a))
2. With regard to the **elements\*** of the international application, this report is based on (*replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report*):

### Description, Pages

1-20 as originally filed

### Claims, Numbers

1-13 as originally filed

### Drawings, Sheets

1/3-3/3 as originally filed

a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) - see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing

- The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:
  - the description, pages
  - the claims, Nos.
  - the drawings, sheets/figs
  - the sequence listing (*specify*):
  - any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*):
- This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).
  - the description, pages
  - the claims, Nos.
  - the drawings, sheets/figs
  - the sequence listing (*specify*):
  - any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*):

\* If item 4 applies, some or all of these sheets may be marked "superseded."

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**Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

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1. Statement

Novelty (N) Yes: Claims 1-13

No: Claims

Inventive step (IS) Yes: Claims 1-13

No: Claims

Industrial applicability (IA) Yes: Claims 1-13

No: Claims

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7):

**see separate sheet**

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**Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application**

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The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

**see separate sheet**

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**Re Item V**

**Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

The following documents (D) are referred to in this communication; the numbering will be adhered to in the rest of the procedure:

D1: US-A-634449  
D2: US-A-2003087970

The document **D1** (Figures 1a and 2; column 2, lines 24-32; column 5, lines 43-51; column 6, lines 48-53), which is regarded as the closest prior art to the subject-matter of independent claims 1, 9, 12 and 13, discloses two filter assemblies suspended in the slurry of a Fischer-Tropsch synthesis reactor by means of the filtrate collection conduit extending through a nozzle at the top of the reactor. This construction enables an easy removal and replacement of the filter by a new or repaired filter.

The subject-matter of apparatus claims 1 and 12 as well as of process claims 9 and 13 differs from the system disclosed in D1 mainly in that it comprises a filter housing adapted to connect to the reactor and adapted to receive the retractable filter means.

Hence, the subject-matter of independent **claims 1, 9, 12 and 13** is novel over D1 (Article 33(2) PCT).

The problem to be solved by the present invention may be so regarded as to provide a filter system and a filtration method permitting on-line exchange of the filter.

The solution to this problem proposed in independent **claims 1, 9, 12 and 13** of the present application is considered to involve an inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT) for the following reasons:

The filter housing adapted to connect to the reactor and adapted to receive the retractable filter means permits a changeover of filter modules without depressurising or cooling the reactor.

The filter system of the invention is particularly suitable for use in three-phase slurry reactors

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such as the ones used for carrying out Fischer-Tropsch synthesis.

Document **D2** (Figure 1; column 4, paragraph 23) discloses the separation of solid catalyst particles from a Fischer-Tropsch synthesis slurry liquid in a filter suspended in the reactor by means of a metal rod and removable from the reactor through a port for maintenance and replacement but also fails to disclose the filter housing.

None of the available prior art documents either discloses or fairly suggests on-line replacement of filters by the use of filter housings with retractable filter means.

**Re Item VII**

**Certain defects in the international application**

Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the documents D1 and D2 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein.